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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 001018

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PMAR PREL KV SR  
SUBJECT: SERBIA ACCEPTS A3 EXPANSION; NO INTENTION TO JOIN  
DUE TO KOSOVO SECURITY FORCE CONCERNS

REF: A. A) STATE 100723  
1B. B) BELGRADE 965

Classified By: Brad Bell, Deputy Political Chief; reasons 1.4 (b, d).

Summary

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11. (C) Serbia accepts Bosnia,s and Montenegro,s intentions to join an expanded Adriatic Charter (A3) but is content to remain an observer of the A3, Serbia,s Assistant Minister for NATO Zoran Vujic told us on September 23. Vujic said Serbia was focused on increasing its participation in Partnership for Peace (PfP), but did not foresee full membership in the Adriatic Charter due to growing Serbian concerns about working closely with countries that had recognized Kosovo and which could potentially provide support to a future Kosovo Security Force. Vujic suggested considering alternative regional mechanisms, such as military cooperation between Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia, since Serbia did not expect those countries to recognize Kosovo in the near future. Vujic assured us that Serbia would remain engaged in the Adriatic Charter as an observer, stressing Serbia,s presence there as important for Serbia and the region. End Summary.

A3 OK for Others, not for Serbia

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12. (C) In response to Ref A points, MFA Assistant Minister for NATO and Security Zoran Vujic said that Serbia had no concerns with Montenegro,s and Bosnia,s request to join the Adriatic Charter and U.S. support for the initiative to expand the Charter. He stressed, however, that Serbia was content to remain solely an observer and had no intentions to seek membership in the Adriatic Charter. He assured us that Serbia would continue to be present at Adriatic Charter events, citing it as important for Serbia and the region.

Serbia,s Concerns with Kosovo Security Force

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13. (C ) Vujic said that seeking Adriatic Charter membership would be inappropriate for Serbia, citing Serbia,s growing concerns with NATO,s involvement and that of its neighbors in the creation of a Kosovo Security Force (KSF). &Serbia,s internal political situation could become complicated if neighboring Balkan countries were to support the creation of the KSF,8 Vujic said. If this were the case, he said it would be increasingly difficult to justify Serbia,s close membership in a group such as the Adriatic Charter while its members were supporting the development of the KSF. Brainstorming, Vujic suggested creating another regional mechanism in which Serbia could seek full membership. He suggesting a grouping with Bosnia and Montenegro, since they had not recognized Kosovo,s independence and Serbia did not expect those neighboring

states & to recognize anytime soon.<sup>8</sup>

Serbia,s Concerns on KSF & Serious<sup>8</sup>

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¶4. (C) Vujic said NATO and the international community needed to take Serbia,s concerns about the KSF seriously. Serbia had found recent comments made at NATO regarding Kosovo as &offensive,<sup>8</sup> Vujic said. The international community &must communicate transparently with us and recognize our rational wishes, which would be the needs of any state,<sup>8</sup> Vujic said. He asked for greater clarity on what kind of oversight NATO would have over the KSF and how it would prevent weapons proliferation in Kosovo. (These comments are a change in Vujic,s tone from several months ago. At that time, he spoke about Serbia recognizing the merits of NATO,s involvement in building the KSF and offered suggestions for making that happen in a way that was transparent but not very public.)

Despite Concerns, Serbia Increasing Relationship with NATO

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¶5. (C) Vujic said that despite these concerns, Serbia intended to increase its relationship with NATO and the PfP process. Serbia and NATO had finished negotiations on the pending Security Agreement and hoped to sign it on October 1 in Brussels. Once the Agreement was signed, he expected Serbia would formalize the process to open its Mission to NATO by December 19. Vujic said he expected Serbia to submit its Individual Partnership Plan (IPP) by the end of November 2008 and its Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) by February 2009. He described these steps as &the first of 12

points which Serbia will take toward NATO in the next 36 months.<sup>8</sup> (He did not say which steps would follow.)

Comment

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¶6. (C ) Although not a senior decision maker, Vujic is decidedly pro-NATO and has been appreciative of our past efforts to support Serbia,s further integration into the Alliance. His comments about the KSF echo ideas that we have also heard from the Ministry of Defense. At a time when the Serbian government is promising to become more constructive on the Kosovo issue if its ICJ resolution is approved, it is somewhat alarming to hear continued non-constructive feedback on issues such as this and the issue of appointing an American to the UNMIK deputy position (Ref B). We will continue to underscore the need for the Serbian government to break decisively with its past approach to Kosovo and work constructively on the full range of regional security issues.

End Comment.

MUNTER